

Message Text

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TAGS: EAIR, UK, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - CONCORDE - REACTION TO COLEMAN
DECISION

1. AS EXPECTED, NEWS OF SECRETARY COLEMAN'S CONCORDE DECISION WAS HEADLINED IN ALL MAJOR BRITISH NEWSPAPERS FEB. 5 AND HAS PROVIDED LEAD STORY ON TELEVISION AND RADIO NEWS PROGRAMS. MEDIA REACTION TO DECISION HAS BEEN ONE OF ELATION TEMPERED ONLY BY REALIZATION, FOR MOST PART OBJECTIVELY REPORTED, THAT CONCORDE STILL FACES THREAT OF COURT INJUNCTION, CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AND/OR DISAPPROVAL BY PORT AUTHORITY OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT RANGED FROM SOBER RESTRAINT OF DAILY TELEGRAPH ("MR. COLEMAN HAS BEEN REASONABLY FAIR TO CONCORDE.") TO NEAR JUBILATION. THE GUARDIAN SAID COLEMAN "TRANSFORMED THE WHOLE FUTURE POTENTIAL OF THE AIRCRAFT BY A DECISION OF ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED BOLDNESS." THE DAILY MAIL REFLECTED VIEWS OF SEVERAL PAPERS: "THIS BREAKTHROUGH IS NOT ONLY CRUCIAL FOR THE PLANE-MAKERS IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE. A DECISION THE OTHER WAY WOULD HAVE SOURED EUROPE'S RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. FOR

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YEARS TO COME, MR. COLEMAN HAS NIPPED A NASTY TRADE WAR

IN THE BUD. AND HIS MATURE AND GENEROUS APPROACH HAS TAKEN THE POLITICAL EXPLOSIVENESS OUT OF THE ISSUE AND LEFT IT TO THE PASSENGERS TO VOTE WITH THEIR POCKET-BOOKS."

3. OFFICIAL BRITISH REACTION HAS BEEN RESTRAINED.

OBVIOUSLY UK OFFICIALS FELT THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO APPEAR TO BE GETTING FROM A DECISION ANY MORE THAN THEY JUSTLY DESERVED AND EXPECTED.

TRADE SECRETARY PETER SHORE STATED: "WE WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT CONCORDE CAN OPERATE WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT." AS DISTINGUISHED FROM OFFICIAL REACTION, HOWEVER, UNOFFICIAL REACTION IN WHITEHALL BEST DESCRIBED AS ONE OF "LOW-KEY DELIGHT" OVER DECISION.

4. SECRETARY COLEMAN CAME IN FOR CONSIDERABLE PERSONAL PRAISE FROM MEDIA FOR OBJECTIVITY, FAIRNESS AND COURAGE OF HIS DECISION. THE FINANCIAL TIMES EXPRESSED THE VIEW OF MANY, NOT ONLY IN THE PRESS BUT ALSO IN UKG WHEN IT WROTE "BUT EVEN MORE IMPRESSIVE IS THE LUCIDITY AND ELOQUENCE, AND PERHAPS ABOVE ALL FAIRNESS WITH WHICH HE SYNTHESIZED ENDLESS COMPLEX AND CONTRADICTORY ARGUMENTS" IN ARRIVING CONCORDE DECISION.

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